



Postal Regulatory Commission
901 New York Avenue NW, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20268-0001

January 31, 2020

RE: Docket RM2017-3

TREA: The Enlisted Association is a Congressionally Chartered Veterans Service Organization (VSO) representing more than 30,000 current and former military service members, veterans and their families and survivors, **strongly discourages** the Postal Regulatory Commission (PRC) from proceeding with its proposed rule affecting the system for regulating market dominant postal rates and classifications. As proposed, the rule will **significantly impair the ability of TREA** and other VSOs to meet the challenges faced by communities that have served and sacrificed for our national security.

TREA functions as the government simply does not provide the kinds of programs, services, or advocacy we provide to deliver and promote the physical, mental, and financial health and wellness that too many in the military and veteran community struggle to achieve. **TREA relies on market dominant mail products to raise funds that help our programs, recruit new members to sustain our missions, and keep our communities informed about veteran and military issues that affect them.** For example, TREA provides:

- Outreach to Members – Advocacy: TREA mailings include 4 quarterly newsletters sent to more than 30,000 on issues related to service members, veterans, retirees, and Guard and Reserve Components. Members rely on these updates and newsletters to keep informed on issues that directly affect their lives related to Department of Defense and Department of Veterans Affairs issues. The proposed rate increase will negatively impact TREA and our advocacy efforts; and
- Outreach for Fund Raising to Support TREA Operations: TREA also relies on mailings to raise funds by recruiting new members, retaining existing members and seeking donations for special programs, like our annual Holiday Program. TREA projects these efforts reach more than 60,000 individuals. The proposed rate increase will negatively impact TREA and our fund raising efforts.

The proposed changes to market-dominant postage rates could increase the cost of our mail-reliant activities and services anywhere from 28 to 40 percent. As the non-profit community continues to navigate the uncertainty of future revenues following a recession and the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, higher mail expenses will force TREA to scale back our outreach and service to members, donors, and most importantly the community of beneficiaries we serve. Veterans and service members need to be informed and they rely on TREA for this valuable information. **TREA asks the PRC to consider the following and address them in the response to public comments:**

- What was the PRC rationale/justification for such a high rate increase? The proposed rule does NOT provide sufficient justification for the increase;
- What other options did the PRC consider before recommending the high rate increase? and
- Will the PRC consider a delay or phased in approach for the rate increase in the next 3 to 5 years?

TREA's commitment to keeping costs low will continue, but PRC must also take steps to show greater appreciation for the fact that increasing mail costs will have an immediate, direct, and negative impact on TREA's ability to address the needs of current and former service members, veterans and their families and survivors. TREA reiterates that the PRC reconsider, delay or consider a phased in approach in the proposed rule. Such action will provide for a more predictable and modest price increases that are capped by inflation.

Sincerely,

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